

9 December 1959

IRAQ

- I. Prime Minister Qasim's release from the hospital last week was celebrated publicly amid strong security precautions which reflect continuing political tension in Iraq.
 - A. Communists organized and dominated the parades, while anti-Communist "nationalists" bided their time.
 - B. Police closed off anti-Communist quarters of Baghdad, and tanks and armored cars were much in evidence.
 - C. Qasim himself appeared spry; he has taken up refurbished lodgings in well-guarded Ministry of Defense.
- II. Qasim himself contributed materially to the tension by bitterly attacking "nationalist" elements in a 6-hour press conference on eve of his emergence.
 - A. He accused them of inspiring the disorders in Kirkuk last July, which he himself had previously attributed to the Communists.
 - B. He denounced anti-Communist students, who had contested Communist control of the Iraqi student union, as divisive elements.
 - C. He blasted the leading Shia Moslem divine, a strong anti-Communist who is heard as a prime religious authority by nearly 60 percent of the Iraqi population, for working "for imperialism and dissension."

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III. Qasim's motive for making such statements at this time is unclear; statements may reflect the pro-Communist views of members of his entourage who stayed close to him while he was in the hospital, and may also reflect emotional strains to which he seems increasingly subject.

- A. Regardless of motive, however, the effect will be to give a new fillip to the Communists. In particular, it will support their campaign to convince the Iraqi public that the Communist Party is the "wave of the future" in Iraq and that it even now has the principal public powers on its side.
- B. However, Iraqi army seems more united and more determined to resist new Communist inroads than it was last spring, when the Communists also seemed to be riding high. We therefore doubt that the Communists will soon be able to recapture completely the predominant position they held then.
- C. Indeed, Qasim's more pronounced leaning to the left may be taken by the anti-Communists as an open declaration of war against them and may spur their plotting against the Qasim regime.

IV. Another assassination attempt against Qasim is a possibility at any time;

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- A. If Qasim survives another attempt, he would likely maintain control, possibly relying still more heavily on Communists.

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- B. Anti-Communist success, however, might spell period of serious instability accompanied by requests from movement leaders for active intervention by neighboring states and almost certainly by requests from some elements, both inside and outside of Iraq, for UK and US material support.

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